

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 07332 280637Z

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LIMDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS INFO DOD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, CB

SUBJ: GKR EFFORT TO GIVE MEDIA A MORE BALANCED PICTURE OF OVERALL
MILITARY RESULTS IN THIS DRY SEASON

1. SINCE MY ARRIVAL HERE LAST DAY OF MARCH, I HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO FANK SETBACKS AND LACK OF ATTENTION FOCUSSED ON FANK SUCCESSES. I ALSO NOTED THAT GKR SPOKESMEN AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA HAD A TENDENCY OF FOCUSING ON DAILY MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS REPORTING ON CASUALTIES, ROCKET ATTACKS ON PHNOM PENH, OR THE BATTLE OF THE DAY RATHER THAN PUTTING THE OVERALL MILITARY SITUATION INTO PERSPECTIVE OVER A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME. WHILE I AM FULLY COGNIZANT OF SOME OF THE REVERSALS SUFFERED BY FANK DURING THIS DRY SEASON, I NEVERTHELESS AM CONVINCED THAT INADEQUATE TREATMENT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE MANY FANK SUCCESSES WHICH GIVE A MORE BALANCED PICTURE OF WHAT HAS OCCURRED IN THIS DRY SEASON. ENEMY SUCCESSES AT OUDONG, KOMPONG LUONG, AND ON LOWER ROUTE 4 HAVE BEEN FULLY REPORTED. ON THE OTHER HAND, FANK'S SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE OF PHNOM PENH, PREY VENG, KAMPOT, KOMPONG THOM AND THE VITAL MEKONG ARTERY HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN SUFFICIENT COVERAGE.

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PAGE 02 PHNOM 07332 280637Z

2. I THEREFORE REQUESTED DAO TO COME UP WITH SUCH A BALANCED ASSESSMENT WHICH I COULD THEN PUT INTO FRENCH IN THE HOPE THAT A HIGH LEVEL GKR OFFICIAL COULD MAKE USE OF IT IN A PRESS CONFERENCE PRESENTING AN OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE DRY SEASON ACTION. SUCH A SOBER, FACTUAL PRESENTATION WOULD IN MY OPINION GO A LONG WAY TO INFUSE BADLY NEEDED SELF CONFIDENCE INTO THE KHMER POPULATION AND ALSO GIVE THE WORLD A MORE BALANCED AND ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS GOING ON MILITARILY IN THIS COUNTRY. ENEMY PROPAGANDA HAS BEEN QUITE SUCCESSFUL IN MAKING MANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AND WORLD PUBLIC OPINION BELIEVE THAT THE GKR IS MERELY HANGING ON BY THE SKIN OF ITS TEETH AND THAT ANY EARLY GRUNK VICTORY IS IN THE OFFING. THIS IS ERRONEOUS BUT PART OF THE PROBLEM LIES IN THE GKR'S INABILITY TO PROJECT A MORE ACCURATE PICTURE OF THE MILITARY SITUATION HERE.

3. I RAISED THIS SUBJECT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ON MAY 27 AND GENERAL PALMER DID LIKEWISE WITH FANK COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ. BOTH MEN EAGERLY SEIZED ON OUR IDEA AND THEY ARE NOW DECIDING WHICH GKR SENIOR LEADER SHOULD HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE REVIEWING THE MILITARY SITUATION DURING THIS CURRENT DRY SEASON. LONG BORET VOLUNTEERED TO CARRY THE BALL AND SOSTHENE HAS EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO HAVE THE PRIME MINISTER MAKE THE PRESENTATION. IN THE MEANTIME, WE ARE WORKING UP AN APPROPRIATE DOCUMENT INCLUDING STATISTICS TO BACK UP OUR ASSESSMENT. WE WILL SEND THIS DOCUMENT ALOS TO WASHINGTON IN THE HOPE THAT, AFTER KGR HAS MADE ITS PITCH TO THE MEDIA REPRESENTED IN PHNOM PENH, EFFORTS CAN ALSO BE MADE IN THE U.S. TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO THE PUBLIC.
DEAN

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